

Harvest: Family in war

by Soldier of Old

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Summary: A conflict is beginning between the Covenant and humanity. The first planet invasion of the war has begun. A family fights for survival against the ruthless Covenant juggernaut.

1. Chapter 1

Mountain Lion Operative: The Beginnings

Prologue

_He sat on his chair and watched the holo-screen. He clicked and pulled random buttons and sat back in his neat chair. He brushed the muffin crumbs off his lab coat to make sure he was not fired for eating in a sterile environment. _

" _How may I help you Sam Cristy?" The computer screen asked._

" _I have implants in my head you know what I want." _

" _Just standard procedure." The computer A.I. laughed in a playful tone._

For such an important station this surely was suicide. A hazardous A.I. jeopardized all they had worked so hard for. And within a wink this "BAD" A.I. could give away all intel. The playful face on the holographic screen soon turned with fear. The A.I. could read his thoughts through the implants in his head.

_The lady A.I. just looked at him and muttered, " You can not just destroy me, that violates Cole Protocol." _

" _Your bluffing Jenny. You are just a computer. No Covenant have been detected on Harvest. They have no reason to come. WE have no large scale military here!" _

_The A.I. laughed. " I forgot that you where so incompetent that they

would withhold information from you. You have always been a failure. Just look at what your boss wrote when you showed him your resume."__

A document popped up on the screen.

Sex: Male

Age: 35

History: No spouse, a loner. Fears social activity. Never has played sports, great mind, he will be an excellent puppet.

Sam clenched his fists. He always came early to avoid the crowds. He had to work a solid 12 hours and could serve them at any time in the day. He was there alone again, on a Sunday doing a 7:00 am-700Pm, and the time at the moment was 7:24. He initiated the purge sequence. The A.I. screamed, trying to report his illegal destruction of an A.I. After saving the contents onto a "ONI Disc" he opened the airlock in the space station floating above the cyan colored planet called Harvest. He flung the Disc out into airlock, and watched as the disc vanished into the abyss of space.

_He sighed and laughed, "Alone at last."__

_The computer erupted with messages. __

"_You are in violation of Cole Protocol. ONI Head Quarters is being contacted. Sealing main doors..."__

_Same gritted his teeth. "Shit! Not on my watch! I am not going to be shot for this, this disposal of inadequate equipment."__

_He ran for the doors and escaped down the tight, metallic doorway. He hurriedly dressed in his space suit and headed for his Spaceship in the zero gravity space dock. The doors of the bay shut. He hopped in the top of the thin pointed craft and pulled open the sliding door and fell in the plastic seat of the ship. He pulled back the throttle. He was nervous, he knew the auto-pilot was locked and he was not certified to fly a space vessel. He blasted through the doors into space. __

" _I am going home!" he yelled aloud. He should have been scared, but he was relieved. No more job, no more rules. As his ship rocketed toward the planet he never noticed the outbound ship powering up to make a jump into slip space. The blast killed him instantly. But in Space, all free-floating matter remains unchanged, and the disc was carried out toward a Covenant patrol of space ships, just waiting for a chance to attack human trade ships. This ship was no exception._

_In the wreckage of the human ship, the drones flew around. One discovered a shiny object and brought it up to the covenant scientists. Realizing it was not a forerunner artifact, but a human object, they sent it up to The Captain of the ship to see if it would serve in future battles against the enemy. __

_The Gold Elite smiled as he shoved the disk into the purple control panel. __

" _Get High Charity on the Com at once!" the elite barked._

A red elite responded, " Yes your excellency. Signal found, connecting in 6 units."

_A prophet appeared on the screen, sitting in his chair. _

" _What is it now?" The old prophet asked with a hint of irritation.

The gold elite answered with a confident tone, " Noble Prophet of Mercy... I have found a human artifact..."

The prophet waved his hands up in disgust, " Listen ship commander, if this is another noise record device I will have you thrown out of the Covenant."

" _No your excellency. This disc has no encryptions yet our scanner reads it's outer information tags as so, 'A.I. of Harvest station. Property of ONI.' With your blessing I would like to follow the directions using a space map that will lead us to where this thing came and forerunners willing, to the human planet."_

_The prophet sighed, " Very well commander. But if you fail, your defeat is on your own head." _

_The screen flipped off. _

_The Golden Elite smiled. " Comrades! We will be the first to set foot on a human planet. We our the start of the great cleansing!"

_All elites cheered in the circular room. The commander sat down in his purple chair and watched the clock on the scanner. 3 days until fully scanned and translated. Than the elite muttered, _

" _For a Prophet Named Mercy he sure does not have any."_

Chapter 1: Life on the planet Harvest

The thirty year old man sat down in his chair and reclined backwards. He knew how much his wife hated tv, so instead of watching his tv that was built and concealed in the ceiling, he bought tv goggles that wirelessly got cable from his cable box. He flipped through the channels. _Commercial, porn, news. _He sighed and sat back as the news was announced.

"_Early this morning around 7:00 am, on ONI research base there was an accident, and one scientist was killed when his space ship collided with an out-bound trade ship._ _ONI says it was a simple accident, yet they are shutting down all space vessel traffic in our solar system."_

He shut the goggles off and put them on the coffee table on his left, which was made of wood, could fold under and then blend in with the rug. He heard his wife call from the other room,

" Harry I got your dinner."

" Be right there Sarah."

Harry sat down at the table that popped out of the floor, and watched as his tired wife bent over to scoop the quick-make meals out of the micro-oven.

She sat across from him, her blond hair pulled back in a pony-tail. Her blue eyes glanced down at her food. She was very attractive (For Harry at least) with her thin body and small chest. When ever she asked Harry how she looked he just would say: Your fine the way you are. She started eating and in between bites of the quick-made noodles she spoke.

" So Harry how was your day?"

" Fine I guess."

" What do you mean by that? What is wrong?"

"Ah nothing. We just got shutdown today, and for the next week I stand to make no money. All our trade ships our grounded do to some idiot who got himself hit by a trade ship."

She smiled and got up from her chair, and whispered to him, " Maybe you can take some time off and spend some on me." she laughed and began kissing him.

Harry was aroused but knew his wife was to tired for what she had suggested. He spoke before she could attempt to lure him in.

" I will take care of the baby. Do not worry. How is he doing anyway?"

"Shit!" his wife laughed and sat back down. " Well he is sleeping now. He just can not get enough attention. Put him down for just a second and he cries. But I love him, but not enough to spend another day with him. I need a break."

Harry laughed and got up from the table and cleaned up while his wife fell asleep on the couch. He did not bother to move her, the snoring would wake young Thomas from his rest. The house they lived in was a pleasant white, with ample shelves containing books, and one computer in the corner of the house. He walked upstairs into his baby's room. He lay there with his brown hair growing in. He smiled and kissed the baby goodnight. Harry walked back down the stairs and decided to take a walk and get out for a change.

He left his house and walked out on the sidewalk along the single lane road. It was all forest to the West of his house but to the east, behind the dark green mountain lay the city. Traffic was at a minimum, seeing as this was the farthest they were aloud to settle under the Harvest Code of 2519. His house had a tilted roof, just like the houses on Earth. He liked the old way things where. A house is a house was the way Harry saw it. Every dwelling past the mountain (accept for Harry's) made their living farming. Climate controlled bubbles dotted the distant clearings in the forest, and not to far away from those bubbles where farm houses.

Another thing that kept the planet mostly rural was the threat the Covenant posed. Harvest was the farthest away from UNSC controlled space and people started leaving in droves. Also being farthest out

in space made the planet hard to reach, and people do not like the isolation. Harry had never been a big fan of space travel, and all the distance did not matter. Plus he was born on Harvest. His wife was not however, but she only visited her family once a year.

The trees were still, not a breeze. The trees stood high and thick. They must have been at least 50 years old. Weird looking things, green, but no branches, it just had vines hanging off of it that were made out of connected leaves. No climate control on Harvest though, not wide-spread anyway, and thus the air was sticky. Strange bugs made their foreign calls as Harry walked down the path that made a circle around Portsmith Global Park. The word National did not exist here, because the planet was a bunch of colonies from other countries on other planets. The walk itself was 2 hours of tranquility and time for Harry to think.

What would become of him if the Space ban was not lifted? His job as a trade chief at New Wave Computers would be ruined. Harry figured it would pass and decided this would give him more time with his family. He went back into his house through the automated door he had installed to recognize voice. The door slid shut behind him and he went to the control remote that controlled lights, heating, air conditioning, etc. Harry shut everything down and headed up to his room. He knew his wife was downstairs, but for some reason he wanted her with him. No, she would wake the baby. He pushed all his thoughts aside and figured he could handle them tomorrow. His eyes slid shut and all troubles vanished with sleep.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2: ONI Purge of Portsmith

Deep under ground one man sat at the head of the Universe. He was the ONI Head, even though no one even knew ONI had a man who called all the shots.

The doors in the gray carpeted, titanium walled room opened. A young man came into the room and lay down a data pad in front of the man in charge of ONI, his name was Irving. Just Irving, but everyone just called him Black Leader, because of his black hair and because of ONI's commitment to secrecy.

The young man told Black Leader the bad news,

" Sir, quarantine is finished on orbital station 3, sir." The officer stopped to clear his throat, " All is accounted for, accept for an A.I. by the name of Jenny. Cameras report that the A.I. was purged and then discarded through the airlock."

Black Leader sighed and sat up in his chair. He looked to be in his late 40's, and had a ghostly white face with black beady eyes. He was an intimidating sight, even more so when he spoke.

Black Leader brushed his hair back with his hand, " Well," He squinted at the Officer's name tag. " Lieutenant Richards, An A.I. always has the proper safeties on it. If anything, if The Covenant got their hands on it they would not be able to purge it. The A.I. is programmed to erase itself if the enemy get their hands on it."

Lieutenant Richards began to sweat. He did not want to anger Black Leader. He was cruel and mean.

" Well, s-sir... There has been a new development. Boot records in the system from this A.I. show that it has outlived it's usage. It should have died years ago. Which means there is a glitch in Jenny's system. She became self-aware one might say, and destroyed her self-destruct program after a scientist tried to destroy her."

Black Leader sighed and than exploded in rage, Bring me the man who made this A.I. and the man who passed this A.I. as safe when we inspected the station!"

"Right away sir!"

The doors slid shut. Irving was all alone save for the A.I. controlled machine guns in the ceiling. He laughed, than ordered the turrets off line.

The doors slid back open and three people walked in.

The Officer from before spoke, " I have brought the incompetent, sir. The inspector was Greg Forbs, and the A.I.'s creator is Miss Jennifer Sampson."

" Good work Richards, leave us." Black Leader waved his hand and the man left the room. Both of the ONI staff remained at attention, the fear showing in their eyes.

"Ah Jenny." Black Leader looked up at her. She was pretty, with blond hair and a small face. She wore her lab coat partially opened exposing her attractive neck and upper chest.

"Yes sir?" She asked meekly. Her blue eyes intent with fear.

" Jenny, your A.I. was busted, why didn't you tell us?"

"With all do respect sir, my A.I. was fine, your sub-systems broke her." She flinched getting ready for her immediate arrest. To her surprise, it did not come.

Black Leader smiled, " Jenny we will talk about this. Sit down. But let me address this man here."

The other man saluted and was in full military garb. "Sir! ONI combat engineer/inspector sir!"

"Quite so. Now why didn't you catch this anomaly?"

"Sir! I did Sir! I sent you a report and you never answered me back!"

The room became quite as Black Leader sighed, " I hate when it comes to this." The Engineer's faced turned white as he pulled a revolver from his suite and put the red dot right in-between the Engineer's eyes. " Good night son." He pulled the trigger and his head exploded as he slumped to the floor.

Jenny was ghostly white now to, biting her lip and trying not to

scream. He laughed, "I want you to sleep with me. Then I will forgive you."

She closed her eyes, "No, I will not you sick bastar..." He blew her head off.

Black Leader quickly activated the turrets again and radioed his communications officer. The Doors slid open and the man saluted and glanced nervously at the floor at the corpses of the two people.

Black Leader shrugged it off, "Accident, the computer thought they were going to harm me, as they said they would kill me, and well the turrets fired."

The Officer bought the horrible excuse. "I will get a clean-up crew in hear right away sir!"

"One More thing Lieutenant."

"Sir?"

"What was that ship's company and what was it's heading?" Black Leader held his head up with his hand.

"Um... The ship runs New Wave Computers through that zone. We do not know what it's heading was."

"Well find out. And I want New Wave Computers employees questioned on the heading. Oh and have them all killed for treason."

The officer paused, "Sir, that is against the Harvest Code..."

Irving cut him off- "Fine I want the man who plains the trajectories of the ships killed, we can play it off to look like he attacked our men when we went to question him. This could have been prevented if they had stayed away from our stations."

"Yes sir." The officer was reluctant. After this action he would resign.

_On board Herron Helicopter/space vessel assault transport. Time 2:00 Am, over Portsmith. _

The Roar of the blades spinning over head made orders hard to hear. The ONI men jumped out as the Helicopter moved from one house to another. The Purge was beginning.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3: Flee or Die

Harry woke to his wife shaking him. She had fear in her eyes.

"Harry... someone is outside." She whispered.

"Stay here. If I don't come back, call the authorities."

She nodded. He reached under the mattress and pulled out a semi-automatic shotgun. He loaded it and went downstairs. He stood in front of the door, thinking a minute, and he realized if he could hit a clay pigeon he could hit a man. He opened the door with the gun pointing out. He pushed a button on the side of the weapon and a tactical light flashed on.

He moved the gun around, scanning his front lawn, the light on the gun shining on the wet grass as he went along. Suddenly he raised the gun to his face and put his finger on the trigger. The man was blinded by the light, shielding his face.

He spoke, " Hey buddy, easy there, I only need one moment of your time."

Harry glared at him, " What the hell do you think your doing, it is 2:00 AM and you scared my wife. I am not talking to you. Get off my property before I shoot you."

"Okay, okay, easy there." The man flashed his ONI badge. Harry sighed,

"Shit, ONI, always trying to blame you for something. Right this way."

The lights turned on as Harry ordered them to, and they sat down in the kitchen as the table popped out of the floor.

"Okay," Harry asked, " What do you want?" Harry had his shotgun under the table and still pointing at the ONI agent sitting across the table.

The man looked at him, " You're a New Wave Computer Trade Chief right? Well that ship was one of yours, one you gave it's itinerary to?"

Harry responded irritably, " Yeah, and your point?"

"That ship that hit our scientist, well also accidentally carried something of ours. The ship never came back, and our sensors read that the Covenant got it. Do you know where it was headed?"

Harry quickly snapped, " No, why don't you check our records instead of bugging the staff?"

The man nodded, " Sorry for the trouble, thank you for your time."

"Yeah, yeah..." Harry kept the gun tracking the agent as he walked out the door. Than suddenly there was a muzzle flash from the road, and Harry fell clutching his leg. The agent screamed,

" Mack, you where only supposed to provide over-watch! You fool you shot him."

The man emerged from the bushes, he was dressed in ONI combat gear, black jump suit, 20mm soft target rifle, and combat helm with night vision sights.

"Let me see if I got him." The man named Mack laughed, then added, "I was ordered to kill him."

Mack approached Harry, and Harry quickly reached for his gun, but Mack kicked it away from him.

" So Harry... ready to die?"

The other agent spoke, " Mack, he has a wife upstairs, don't."

"It is what I get paid for Alex." Mack said as he pushed the barrel of the gun into Harry's chest.

The other agent (Alex) pulled out a pistol from his suite. He aimed the red dot right on Mack's forehead. " I can not let you do that Mack. Not all of us listen to Black Leader, you know he is heartless and insane!"

Mack nodded than said, "He pays the bills. Shoot me. You do not have the guts."

Mack pulled the trigger, and the distinct "click" was heard.

" Damn!" Mack yelled, "Stupid thing jammed! Alex give me your gun."

Alex yelled, "No! Leave him be."

Mack muttered to himself and pulled a knife out from his belt, " I guess I will just have to gut him them."

Alex muttered, " You sick little shit, you will rot in hell." He fired his gun and Mack fell motionless on the ground, with one bullet hole going through his helmet.

" I guess..." Mack whispered, " You did have the guts..." then he died.

" What have I done... what have I done!" Alex sobbed, than put the gun to his head, and muttered to Harry, " Leave now. They will come to get us and find us dead. They will kill you." He shot the pistol and fell down dead.

Harry's wife came out with the baby. " I heard gun shots so I... I panicked."

" It is okay honey. We have to go."

She gasped, " But your leg..."

Harry interrupted her, " My leg is fine! We have to go now. Grab my wallet and your purse and lets go. Put the baby in the back of the car."

"Why Harry?" she asked than she screamed as she tripped over the dead body of Alex.

" That is why. Go, now!"

Sarah ran into the house and emerged with the wallet and purse. Harry

was already in the driver's seat, and the baby was automatically buckled in the car seat. The car was slick and a dark blue. It was flat and it started by voice activation. Harry ordered the car to start up, then felt the sensors on his seat attach to the back of his head. A computerized voice chirped,

" You are out of an auto-pilot zone, sensors adjusting for human pilot." The seat belts automatically buckled in as the control panel on the dash board gave frequent travel routes that Harry had driven. It also could display maps, broadcast weather, and play music. The steering wheel un-locked with a metallic thump and Harry was speeding down the driveway into the night sky.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Day 2 of waiting

The Golden Elite arose from his quarters as the doors opened with a weird "thrum". He sat down in the seat with a circular holographic control panel that glowed cyan. He could see everything from this vantage point. Everything else was distant from him, the thick glass separated him from the front control part of the ship. Iso'tolla (golden elite) thought it was a cowardly thing for him to be back here and not at the front, but the Council demanded this was how the ship was to be ran. But since when did they know anything about war?

He clicked his mandibles and let out a growl.

He yelled out to his ship commanders sitting in front of him at smaller holographic panels.

"Patch me in to the scientists! I want information on our A.I.!"

A blue elite responded and hit a few keys on the panel. " Your excellency, transmitting software in 10 units. The floating tentacle covered creature's ticking noises became audible,

" Iso'tolla, be patient, all is going well. If you don't give us some space however..."

The golden elite turned in his floating purple chair and barked at his assistant in dark red colored armor,

" Zolon'mora, get a jackal down their, have the jackal shoot out his brains."

She responded, " Yes your excellency." she barked at a grunt runner and had him get the jackal ready.

Iso'tolla thought to himself and scanned everything in the ship, something he had never done before. Four hours later it was finished, and he was still bored.

He yelled at the two commanders down below on their own control panels,

" Lower the shields! Raise the interceptor (antenna). I want digital feed from the campaign against the Brutes!"

The elite turned and looked at Iso'tolla.

" Yes excellency, but that would mean we would be killed by even a common space rock!"

" Thank you for sharing that with me commander, now remember who is in charge!"

The elite was silent, than the low thrumming of the shields past away.

The commander elite yelled to Iso'tolla, " Shields down, interference 0. Patching into Covenant battle net."

A screen dropped down in front of the holo-panel as Iso'tolla watched his war report.

A minor prophet stood, his chair was gone, and his head dress was missing. Blood ran from his mouth. He spoke,

" Hello noble creatures of the Covenant. Prophet Confession here, and witnessing this important battle against the Brutes." The camera panned out as vehicles with spidery legs fired cannons at the advancing Wraith tanks and Covenant infantry. The wraith blasts seared through the desert plain and hit the spider like vehicle. A brilliant flash, followed by cheering was heard. But than things got ugly._

A Golden Elite caught the Prophet, as a blade pierced through the Prophet's neck. Hunters began firing their fuel rod cannons, as the wave of brutes charged towards them. The golden elite dropped the prophet's lifeless corpse and charged ahead into battle. Grunts and jackals formed a defensive perimeter. A grunt scream was heard as the camera fell on the ground, covered in cyan colored blood. _

Amongst the bodies a huge, White Brute stood in front of the camera and raised it with one hand so it faced him. _

" To all those orange husks of meet, those damn lizards, and bird headed beasts! You all have been warned! Get off our planet! We will never forget this invasion, and we will build and topple your empire..." _

The brute stopped talking as a energy sword pierced his heart and severed him from his waist. The golden elite, covered in purple blood fell to the ground. _

The feed ended. The Iso'tolla frowned.

" I should have led that campaign."

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5: All Hell is breaking loose

Downtown Porsmouth was a mess. Cars crashed everywhere. The high skyscrapers reflected the panicky mood everyone was in. Sarah spoke to Harry.

" Harry," she said, " Turn on the radio, see what all the traffic and crashes are from."

" Good idea, while I do that you take care of the baby, he won't stop crying!"

Harry turned on the radio and cranked up the volume to drown out the baby crying.

The DJ spoke, "Today is not a good day to be on the road folks..." he paused, "This is DJ Mad Marvin, and well things are not looking so good in Portsmith today. Here is the news with Amy Brown."

Another voice filled the radio, " The time is 8:00 A.M. At 6:00 A.M. this morning all automobiles auto-pilot malfunctioned due to a 'slip space rupture' believed to be caused by a UNSC military carrier vessel that jumped in to close to our planet. We have no more info at this time, now for the traffic report..."

Harry clicked the radio off. All the cars in front of him suddenly started crashing into guard-rails and hitting the toll-booth up ahead.

" Damn!" Harry yelled as the steering wheel started jerking around, " Auto-Pilot is dead!"

Sarah got back into her seat and strapped herself in. The roar of Herron Helicopters/ space ships exiting into the atmosphere made a deafening roar. Thousands of ships carrying Armored Jeeps with 20mm guns and Goliath Main battle tanks flew overhead towards the heart of Portsmith. One hovered over the tool booth and a voice came from it.

" Attention citizens of Portsmith! Auto-Pilot is no longer safe. Drive cars manually. There is nothing to fear. All citizens meet at Portsmith stadium."

Sarah spoke over the baby's crying, " You hear that?"

Harry nodded, " What the hell is going on?"

Sarah shrugged, " I have no idea."

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6: War on Harvest

Iso'tolla stood up from his chair and examined his enhanced feed from the ships telescopes.

" Not even one defensive measure. What a disappointment. Harvest will be like killing a Grunt- a big waste of time and not impressive."

The Blue Elite spoke, " Your excellency, Enemy Space vessel on other side of the planet, permission to engage?"

Iso'tolla yelled, " Wart Wart Wart!"

With that the shields activated and the ship glided over towards the other side of the planet. The Carrier launched it's wave of spoon-like fighter craft called Pitch Fork Fighters. They ascended towards the Covenant cruiser and opened fire. The missiles and 60mm bullets bounced harmlessly off the ship's shields. Plasma cannons fired into the carrier, ripping it open, but the PF fighters kept on coming.

Back down in Portsmith, Harry, Sarah, and the baby pulled off the highway and went into a bar. The bar was empty, accept for one man behind the counter, he was dressed in full combat garb, and had an M3HA assault rifle slung at his side.

The man spoke, " I am not looting, this is my bar, I am also part of the National Guard."

Harry had his shotgun at his side, and Sarah was holding the baby. Thunderous shots echoed through the sky, louder than thunder.

The bartender yelled, "I am goin up on the roof to see what is up."

Sarah sat down with the baby while Harry and the other man went into the back room and climbed up a ladder. They got outside and Harry got a good glimpse at the man. He was Hispanic with dark skin and black hair. He looked to be in his 40's and he was muscular.

" Look!" the man yelled to Harry.

They both stared up at the sky as it erupted from light blue to dark orange. One large ship could be seen in the atmosphere, a human ship, the other, a sleek purple alien ship. Herron ships fired rockets and explosions followed at Covenant drop ships exploded. Tiny black dots could be seen in the skies around the two ships, like bees swarming around their nest. A battle was raging above the city. Two Spook drop ships started hovering over towards the bar. The Hispanic man ducked and told Harry to do the same.

The man yelled into his radio, " This is scout Pedro. I need back-up, infantry spotted on Williams and Brons street intersection."

The radio crackled and than a voice came on, " Roger Private, Herrons in bound."

Just than a Seraph fighter sprayed the street with plasma fire, melting the road's and the wall of the bar facing the street was melted clean off.

Pedro cursed, " Damn! They are clearing a path for their infantry to land on. Can you use a gun?"

Harry raised his shotgun, " Hell yes!"

Pedro sighed, and pulled a 45 caliber machine gun from his belt, " Take this, your shotgun can not reach that distance. I take it you know how to use a gun. Spray the street."

Harry answered, " I will go down below, my wife might be hurt, and the baby."

" Okay padre!" he said as he sprayed the street, taking down a few short aliens.

Harry climbed down the ladder with his shotgun slung on his back and the sub-machine gun in hand. Sarah was under the counter with the baby. Harry yelled at her,

" See those stairs, get down in the basement, your not safe hear, I will protect you."

Without even hesitating she ran with the baby down into the basement. Harry threw down a shotgun and told her to use it if necessary. He then closed the trap door and shoved a liquor cabinet over the door, concealing it. He pulled the bolt back and aimed the gun at the burned opening in the wall. He saw a blue, tall alien spray the roof top with his rifle. Then the short aliens started to race for the hole in the wall. Harry hid under the counter, waiting to surprise them. He could hear them sniffing and barking. Harry looked up from under the counter at the mirror behind the counter. He could see four short aliens, and they where armed with purple, spiked weapons and green little hand-held weapons. They wore some sort of mask. He waited until they where all together than he sprang out from behind the counter. The two grunts in front fell, the other one primed a plasma grenade but dropped it and blew himself up. The remaining one fired his needeler as Harry ducked back behind the counter. The needle like things splintered the wooden counter.

" Okay you little bastard!" Harry yelled as he checked his ammo, only two thirty round clips left. He dove over the counter, trying to pry the needeler from the grunt's paw.

Harry grabbed the creatures face with one hand, while the other hand kept the grunt's gun hand pinned to the floor. He ripped the creature's mask and looked at the creatures black, beady eyes, and it's razor sharp teeth. The grunt hissed and spat as he suffocated. Harry then grabbed the needeler and dove back under the counter. He looked at the mirror, only to realize the grunts had shot it into pieces in the last fight. He could hear scraping on the floor again. He slowly poked his head up and felt the heat from a plasma bolt veer over his head. Harry fired the purple weapon in the general direction of the creature with the bird like head and the glowing hand held shield. The needles homed in on the jackal and the force of the needles hitting the shield knocked the creature over and the shield disintegrated. A humming noise could be heard as the jackal over charged his plasma pistol and came at Harry. Harry whipped up his sub-machine gun and literally cut the jackal in half under a hail of bullets. 15 more rounds left in the clip.

Pedro yelled something from upstairs, but it was muffled. Harry steadied his gun and looked down through the small scope. A blue, squid shaped head was right on his sights. The creature growled and showed his teeth as he clicked his mandibles. He raised his plasma rifle and fired blue bolts rapidly across towards Harry. Harry ducked behind the counter, but he could feel the plasma impacting, and it was rapidly melting through the wood. The counter caught on fire and Harry dove away with his gun in hand. Harry hoped Pedro would come down but knew it would not happen, he could hear gun fire upstairs still. The elite tried firing again, but the gun over heated and the elite angrily threw it at Harry. It burned Harry and he screamed in

pain as it hit his chest. Harry fired into the elites chest, and it's shields gave out, but Harry ran out of ammo. The elite grabbed Harry by the throat and began choking him, clicking his mandibles in delight. Suddenly, the liquor cabinet flew up and the trap door opened. The elite whipped around and raised his hands just in time to get blown away by a shotgun blast.

Sarah breathed heavily as she cradled the gun in one hand and her baby in the other.

" Harry..." she panted, " I just wanted to have our baby grow up with a father. Harry laughed and she dropped the shotgun as they hugged, and he kissed baby Tomas on the head.

" I understand Sarah, thank you." Harry wiped his sweaty brown hair back.

Pedro ran down the stairs with his gun. Pointed toward the hole in the wall. " Things are heating up, vamanos!" He yelled, " Oh my God... What are those?" Pedro muttered as the huge blue beasts with shields bashed down the other wall, leaving another hole.

"Run padres!" He yelled as a green blast shot out from the creature's hands and blasted Pedro's flesh all over the back wall.

Harry grabbed Sarah by the arm and took his shotgun from her. He discarded the sub-machine gun as they ran out the other side of the wall. Just than a 11 foot high square metal car with wheels and quad 20mm turrets pulled up. 10 soldiers dismounted. They quickly hurried Sarah and Harry into the back of the car.

Harry tired warning them, " Huge monsters!" he yelled, just as a green blast killed them all. The man on the turret of the vehicle shouted, " You bastards, eat some!" he fired and the bullets pinged off of them as they raised their shields and their guns started to glow. He yelled into the com in his helm, " This is troop deployment car 90. Requesting air strike on our position."

"Roger car90, PF fighters in-bound. You might wanna get out of there now."

" Understood." he said as he ordered the driver, " Punch it." The car sped off down streets filled with ghosts and creeps.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7: I want to get away

The man driving opened up the small porthole linking the driver with the troop-transport part of the car.

He gave the thumbs up signal, " Don't worry folks, everything is gonna be all right."

Harry gripped the gun like a scared child grips a teddy bear. He clenched his teeth as he said a silent prayer, and for once in his life he believed in God. Sarah leaned over toward him with the baby breast feeding on her bosom. She figured it would take Tomas's mind off of the loud zapping noises and echoing gun shots. They hunkered

down together, and for a moment, they were more of a family now than ever. Fear can do strange things, it can paralyze you, maybe even bring you to God, or bring you closer to those you love. Fear is more than an emotion, it is a uniting force. The cockpit of the vehicle hummed with chatter, as the quad 20mm machine gun on the roof of the metal cube shook the whole vehicle. The car motored down through a wide street.

The echoing booms and the sounds of bugs in the hot summer air added to the chirping radio in the car.

" ONI extraction required. Way points 32 south-east by 45 North." the radio broadcaster announced.

" Damn!" The driver yelled, " We gotta help em."

The man sitting shotgun yelled at him, " Hell no, what have those ONI pricks done for anyone?"

" Look soldier! I can't let someone die!" The car suddenly screeched and shifted weight as it veered off down into a patch of woods.

Iso'tolla stood in the docking bay as he had his assistant Zolan' Mora strapped him in toe the side of the Spook drop ship. The ship carried only three elites on each side, instead of 4 grunts, 2 jackals, and one elite on each side. Zolan'Mora than strapped herself in as the sides of the drop ship closed. The com on the Golden Elite's head chirped.

" Greetings Commander, and Zolon Mora. I am Zukaov'tokla, your special ops leader. When we hit the ground your excellency, meet up with me. I am the Elite in the black armor. My comrades are wearing cyan armor."

The com chirped again as Iso'tolla responded to the special ops leader, " I know the plan. Do not treat me like a grunt." Than he barked, " I may have put you in charge of those elites, but I still have the final say."

" Yes your excellency, how foolish of me." Zukaov rolled his eyes, but luckily it was not visible to Iso'tolla or he would have killed him on the spot. Iso'tolla had a really bad temper.

The pilot of the ship was a jackal, Iso'tolla wanted a Jackal, he was not a racist creature like most of the elites. Even though he be littled grunts, he still respected most members of the Covenant. And he was no dummy, Jackals had better eyes, ears, and noses than elites. Elites won over in the brains and strength category however. Jackals lacked the necessary vocal-cords to communicate with words, so the Jackal had implants in his head that talked for him.

The computerized voice spoke, " Thank you, your excellency, for having me aboard. We will be approaching the source of the A.I.'s creation. ETA in 20 units, I apologize for the long run, I got confused after taking the evasive maneuverers."

Zukaov barked, " You little long necked good for nothing bird, I will shoot you..."

Iso'Tolla spoke up, " No you will not. I am in control and I think Drog is doing a great job."

Drog the jackal's computerized voice spoke in, " I am flattered, your excellency."

Zukaov grunted just soft enough that only he could hear it. "I hope he dies."

The Drop ship landed, and the doors on the u-shaped hovering vehicle opened up as Iso'Tolla led his men out. Zolon'Mora followed not to far away. No words where uttered as the elites crouched in the green, 5foot high weeds growing in the field they where dropped into. The complex was ahead of them, and it was up on a hill. The doors where shut, all windows had automatically sealed as the drop-ship flew over.

" That jackal of yours just blew our cover by flying over the building!" Zuakov said, with a hint of amusement.

"Shut up Zukaov, I ordered him to do it. Look!" Iso'tolla ordered.

Plasma fire erupted hitting the gray building and melting the steel door to the front entrance. The elites silently watched, while Zolon'Mora readied her needler. A flash of white light was seen overhead, followed by a loud explosion and the noise of a jet screaming over their heads. A pf fighter had destroyed their drop ship, and Drog's lifeless body could be seen dangling from the crashed ship on the roof of the human building.

Iso'tolla broke the silence, " Zolon'Mora, report on enemy strength."

"Your excellency, we bombarded a bunker not to far from here. Banshee patrols claim that they have the wounded in here." she stated with a hint of pride at her intellect.

"What of this building, than? Special ops put this on high priority." Iso'tolla questioned.

Zolon'Mora shrugged, and Zukaov quickly answered, " The bunker was where the disc you found was made. It was bombarded with plasma, special ops had no idea about it." The black elite hung his head in embarrassment at destroying such valuable intelligence. But we picked up reports of a human with leadership authority. We need to bag him and get out.."

Zukaov barked as he had his men fan out, crawling through the grass towards the base. "Engage active camouflage." Zuakov ordered.

Iso'tolla was angered and spat into his com, " I did not give you the orders, now you come back here!"

Zukaov's voice chirped through the com, " Not anymore. Prophet Mercy wants me to gather a present for him." Zukaov was no where to be found, his camouflage made him invisible.

Iso'tolla than had Zolon'Mora radio for a platoon sized force to

rally at their position. Iso'tolla smirked, " Time to take matters into my own hands. One more thing Zolon'Mora, make sure they bring some banshees, enough to blow this complex off the planet."

Zolon'Mora nodded, " Yes your excellency."

Thomas had his fill from his mother's bosom, and gurgled, as if to say,

" What the hell?"

Thousands of explosions kept the baby alert, and now it was dead quite. They where all crouched down in the blown out shell of a underground bunker of sorts.

"Shit!" The soldier exclaimed, as he wandered through the shadows of the burned out complex. "No survivors, this mission is FUBAR!" He looked around and stared at Harry. " What the hell are you looking at?"

Harry sensed the desperation in the men's voices, and he went off, grabbing his wife by the hand, and leading her up into a quiet, black room. Chairs where knocked over, papers everywhere, but no signs otherwise that anything had happened. He rested the gun down, and looked about.

Signs, paper signs, hanging from the charred walls. They read,

"ONI, keeping the galaxy together under one lid." another one read, " Leaking information gets a beating." The last sign was one that hung down off the center of the room, "Lobby."

He sighed and pulled up a chair his wife. She shook her head,

"I want to sit on the floor." She leaned up against the wall and began talking to her baby, Thomas, " I am sorry you had to go threw this. But do not worry sweetie, mommy and daddy will make it better." The odd thing was this comforted Harry more than it comforted the baby. The Nuclear family still survived long into the 25th century.

He could hear the distant echoes of the soldiers yelling "Clear!" as they checked each room in the hallway. Sarah pondered her situation, and looked to Harry for reassurance.

" Honey, do you think we will get out of here?"

Harry sighed, " Ah yeah. ONI gets help when everyone else parishes. They will come to remove their technology, and we will get a ride with them."

Sarah let out a long breath, " I am tired Harry, all the stress, I..." she started snoring.

He smiled, " Sleep tight."

Just than a soldier ran up, yelling at the top of his lungs, " I want to get away! AWAY FROM HERE!"

Harry grabbed the man by his armored shoulders, " Shut up you will scare my wife and my son. Where are the other soldiers?"

"Dead, dropped down, dead, cut in two." He started shaking.

"Get a hold of yourself!" Harry said as he shook him. "Nothing can just appear and kill off everyone."

"Not appear, but cloaked, almost invisible."

"That is impossible..." Harry ducked as the soldier fired his gun over into a slight distorted shadow.

" What are you doing?" Harry yelled.

Just than a cyan colored elite fell to the ground, blood pouring out of his headless body.

The marine cradled his gun and muttered, "Told you. I am gettin the hell out of doge mister." The soldier picked up his gun. " You should do the same."

Harry shook his wife and she awoke, " I had the most horrible nightmare... Oh shit! I am still dreaming." She said groggily.

" We got to go honey." Harry whispered in her ear.

He had the shotgun slung on his shoulder as he carried the baby in one arm and held his wife's small hand in his work worn hand. They climbed up the stairs, which at one time led to another part of the building, now though, there was a huge black charred hole that separated the stairs. Sarah gasped, and looked down through the hole, it went all the way down into the bowels of the building. A huge atrium was under them, it was filled with dead bodies, piled one on top of the other. Than the slight glow of a energy sword was seen. Harry pulled Sarah back.

"The landing of the stairs is right above our heads. Do not look down, just climb." Harry said in a urgent tone.

The soldier had already hurried along and jumped the gap in the stairs, but he lost his footing and grasped the edge of the stairs. His rifle fell from his grasp, echoing as it hit the floor below. He pulled himself up, and hurried along up the stairs. His weight had over-stressed the shaky stairs already, and another huge chunk fell, making the six foot gap a twelve foot gap.

" Hey slick, give us a hand." Harry yelled to the soldier. The soldier just looked down at them and kept running, through the door on the landing above them.

Sarah sobbed, tired and emotionally drained. "He left us. He left us!"

"Sssh honey, you hold the baby. I am going to climb up and see if there is something I can throw down to you." Harry then walked over to the ledge and put his back to the hole. He closed his eyes tight in fear, and jumped. He felt his hands grip slippery cement. He opened his eyes and desperately clawed his way up onto the landing. He shouldered his shot gun and turned the tactical light on. A long,

fire hose hung in a glass cabinet. Perfect for climbing.

He tied the hose around his waist and threw it down to Sarah. " Tie it around you waist, than hold the baby."

Sarah propped the baby up against her shoulder, and tied it around her waist, then grasped the baby. Harry then started looking for a hand-hold.

"What is the hold up. Hurry Harry. I am scared." Sarah pleaded.

" Don't worry sweetheart. I am just looking for a handhold..." He saw the door about six feet away from him. It would have to do.

" Something is coming up the stairs, Harry hurry."

Harry saw the glowing of the sword and quickly sprinted, adrenalin pumping through his veins. He raced towards the door and grabbed the handle, as he felt the tension of Sarah's weight disappear. They quickly un-tied the fire-hose from their waists. Sarah darted through the door, and Harry went back to get his gun. Harry was startled to see a cyan colored elite with a glowing sword. Harry's shotgun was right at the elite's feet.

Harry ran at the elite, and kneed the elite in the chest in an attempt to knock the creature off the stairs. The elite laughed, then spoke in excellent English, "You can not hurt me." The elite's shields flickered, and the elite slipped, his shielding causing him to slip on the damp cement. The elite fell silently to his death, only a distant thud was heard. Harry grabbed the shotgun and ran outside. His wife stood, gaping into the distance.

Covenant swarmed a distant complex, as banshees screamed over head, firing green bolts through the evening sky. Explosions rippled the ground. Herron drop ships went down by the thousands as they tried in vain to evacuate the survivors. One stalled and was barreling straight towards Harry and his family. Harry grabbed his wife and shoved her out of the way. The Herron stopped, with the nose of the ship just stopping short of three inches away from Harry's nose. Two soldiers came out of the back of the ship and asked,

" Anyone alive down there?"

Harry shook his head, "No, none, all dead."

They rushed Sarah and Harry into the vessel as the retractable doors folded up, muffling all the sounds of the rumbling of the Covenant Juggernaut. Harry sighed, and kissed his baby on the head, than open mouth kissed his wife. She laughed and spat,

"How does my tongue taste?"

Harry laughed, " Better than ever."

It was over. They survived.

8. Epilogue

Epilogue

Refugees of that tragic event on Harvest left Harry and his family on a planet called Espilion II. Harry still worked for a computer company, just a different one. Sarah, having raised her child to the ripe age of 10, decided to work part time as a substitute teacher. Life was good, until the day the Covenant would catch up with them, but that is another tale.

Iso'tolla lost the land battle for the planet, he was no match for human ground tactics. He glassed the planet, and he was punished, for in his delay to glass the planet, most of the humans escaped. To humanity, he is now known as "Captain Glass Ass." Iso'tolla vows to find those humans that got away, and the ones that costed him five years of his life, wasted in prison.

End
file.